



Styrofoam Tombstones

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TOOLS:

- [Caulking gun \(1\)](#)
- [Dremel rotary tool \(1\)](#)
- [Dremel router attachment \(1\)](#)
- [Goggles \(1\)](#)
- [Hacksaw \(1\)](#)
- [Paper mask \(1\)](#)
- [Putty knife \(1\)](#)
- [Sandpaper \(1\)](#)
- [Sharp object \(1\)](#)
- [Wood file \(1\)](#)



PARTS:

- [Styrofoam \(1\)](#)
- [Wood putty \(1\)](#)
- [Liquid Nails glue \(1\)](#)
- [PVC pipe \(1\)](#)
[cheapest stuff available](#)
- [Dowel pins \(1\)](#)
[fit nicely into PVC](#)
- [Latex exterior paint \(1\)](#)
- [Acrylic paint \(1\)](#)
- [Uni-ball Gel Impact pen \(1\)](#)
[for drawing on foam](#)
- [Sand \(1\)](#)
[Dry](#)

SUMMARY

Over the years I've learned many techniques, shortcuts, and ways of improving the construction of styrofoam tombstones. Here's how to make your own lightweight, sculptured, and professional-looking masterpieces guaranteed to add a creepy touch to your haunted

house.

Step 1 — Design your tombstone.



- Find a design on the web, in a book, or in your local cemetery. Halloweenmonsterlist.info also has patterns. Transfer your design to paper, tape it onto the foam, and punch small holes into the foam to mark it out.

Step 2 — Cut out the shape.



- Remove the paper and connect the dots with a pen. I highly recommend a Sanford Uni-ball Gel Impact pen; it's the best pen I've ever used on foam. Use a hacksaw to cut out the shape. Clean up the edges with the file and sandpaper.
- Before you start carving the design, you should modify the Dremel router attachment so the sandpaper cylinder bit (which is good for clearing out large areas) can fit through the router attachment.
- Put on your goggles and respirator (I'm not kidding — chunks of plastic will be flying everywhere), use the multi-purpose bit that comes with the router attachment, and grind down the lip on the inside of the router attachment. Now the attachment is usable for your purposes.

Step 3 — Draw patterns onto the foam.



- Use a printer to make stencils for any text or flourishes you wish to put on your tombstone. Poke them out and trace with the pen. Before you begin carving, make notes on how deep you want each area.

Step 4 — Carve the design with a Dremel router.



- With your goggles and mask on, use the multipurpose bit and the router attachment to slowly cut out the outline. It's generally best to start with the deepest parts first. Decide on your deepest depth, and adjust the router accordingly (3/4" is generally as deep as you want to go). Cut on the inside of your lines (unless they're letters).
- After you cut out the outline, carve out the rest of the area using the large cylindrical drum sander bit. Go slowly, or the plastic will melt, flinging melted plastic at you and ruining your bit. Do this to each area until your tombstone is carved out completely.
- TIP: For depressed letters (easy), cut along the inside of the letters with the multi-purpose bit. Then, using the flat bit with the ridges or the chainsaw sharpening bit, adjust the depth and clean up the inside of the letters. For raised letters (difficult), cut along the outside of the letters with the multipurpose bit. Carve out the letters and at least an area of 1/2" surrounding the letters. Next, take the flat, ridged bit (or chainsaw bit) and clean up around the letters. Raised letters look nice, but they're more difficult



Step 5 — Clean up the tombstone.



- Take the light sandpaper and sand the surface of the tombstone. Holes and uneven areas can be patched up with wood putty. Note that wood putty has a different texture and will appear shiny after it's painted. In certain cases, it might be best to just leave errors.

Step 6 — Add backing and PVC supports.



- Cut two 1' pieces of PVC pipe. Take another sheet of styrofoam and cut it out to match the outline of your tombstone. File and sand the edges. Measure the width of the base and divide it by 3 — this will tell you where to place the PVC pipes. Mark off the points and draw two 1' lines on both the tombstone and the backing. Using the Dremel sandpaper cylinder bit, cut a channel approximately 1/2" deep and 1" wide. Adjust the width and depth until the PVC pipe fits in snugly, and both the tombstone and the backing fit together.
- Lay the tombstone face-down on a flat surface. Prepare your Liquid Nails project glue. Squirt a line in both channels for the PVC pipes on the tombstone and on the backing. Now lay down a bead of glue that follows the outline about 1 1/2" away from the edge, all the way around the tombstone piece.
- Place the backing side down on the back of the tombstone face, line it up, and press the 2 halves together. Place some flat boards across the back and weigh it down with heavy objects. Let it sit 24 hours.

Step 7 — Putty the edges.



- File and sandpaper the edges until they feel like a single piece of foam. Smooth some putty into the creases to protect the inside from moisture and to hold them together tighter. Let dry for 24 hours.

Step 8 — Paint the tombstone.



- Use a spray gun, an airbrush, or a paintbrush. Use thick latex exterior paint as a base coat. Make sure to give it a couple of thick coats. While the first coat dries, sprinkle sand all over the tombstone to give it a stone texture.
- NOTE: Do not use spray paint! It will eat the styrofoam!



Step 9 — Display the tombstone.



- Cut the dowel rods into 1' sections. Measure the distance between the centers of the PVC pipes in the bottom of the tombstone. Take your steel rod (or whatever you use to make a hole) and hammer a hole in the ground approximately 6" deep. Place your dowel pins in the holes and the tombstone over your dowel pins. Admire your work and enjoy!

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